

4.11 ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE

For resource areas identifying potentially adverse impacts in Chapter 4, an analysis was performed to identify whether there would be disproportionately high and adverse effects on minority populations and low-income populations (see Section 3.11.1).

In addition, targeted outreach to minority and low-income groups and organizations was conducted as part of the LEIS process to expand participation of potentially affected populations.

In accordance with *EO 12898*, Section 3.11 addresses the existing locations of minority populations and low-income populations living in the three counties affected by the proposed alternatives. The LEIS public participation process was expanded to include identification of organizations representing and serving members of minority and low-income populations. Scoping letters were sent to approximately 75 organizations and individuals identified through this process. In addition, scoping letters in English and Spanish were sent to all recipients.

4.11.1 Alternative 1

As described in Section 2.1.1, military activities could vary from the same as currently conducted to an expanded range of capabilities and intensified use. Noise from expanded aviation and training activities has been assessed in Section 4.12. Assuming the same relative combination of aircraft, operations on North and South McGregor could be expanded by a factor of 6.3 and 7.9, respectively, and still not exceed L_{dnmr} 55. Other activities such as the proposed expansion of the GAF activities at HAFB and the associated new air-to-ground training range; the potential development of a helicopter training range; and the designation of additional controlled access FTX sites would either increase noise levels solely within the training ranges and restricted airspace boundaries, or would be located within areas where capacity still exists to increase activity levels without exceeding noise thresholds. Therefore, if elevated noise levels remain within the training ranges and restricted areas, there would be no significant adverse noise effects and no potential for disproportionately high and adverse noise effects on minority or low-income populations.

Alternative 1 would not cause environmental health or safety risks that would disproportionately affect children.

4.11.2 Alternative 2

Under Alternative 2, aircraft-related noise would be the same as under Alternative 1, with some increased potential for noise impacts due to increased recreation access on public lands. The extent of recreation activities is not currently known. As under Alternative 1, if elevated noise levels remain within the training ranges and restricted areas, noise level increases would occur, but there would be no significant adverse noise effects and no potential for disproportionately high and adverse noise effects on minority or low-income populations.

Increased ground access to TCPs, if identified on the returned lands, could make it easier for Native Americans to practice certain traditions.

Alternative 2 would not cause environmental health or safety risks that would disproportionately affect children.

4.11.3 Alternative 3

Under Alternative 3, elevated noise levels on Otero Mesa would not occur. Missile firings would become more directionally constrained, reducing noise dispersion, and noise from ground training would be reduced. Depending upon the specific location, noise would be similar to or less than Alternative 1. As under Alternative 2, if noise levels remain within the training ranges and restricted areas, noise level increases would occur, but there would be no significant adverse noise effects and no potential for disproportionately high and adverse noise effects on minority or low-income populations.

Increased ground access to TCPs, if identified on the returned lands, could make it easier for Native Americans to practice certain traditions.

Alternative 3 would not cause environmental health or safety risks that would disproportionately affect children.

4.11.4 Alternative 4

Under Alternative 4, depending upon the specific location, noise would be similar to or less than Alternative 1. As under Alternative 3, if elevated noise levels from military training activities remain within the training ranges and restricted areas, increases would occur, but there would be no significant adverse noise effects and no potential for disproportionately high and adverse noise effects on minority or low-income populations.

Increased ground access to TCPs, if identified on the returned lands, could make it easier for Native Americans to practice certain traditions.

Alternative 4 would not cause environmental health or safety risks that would disproportionately affect children.

4.11.5 Alternative 5 – No Action

Under Alternative 5, aircraft noise would be similar to or less than current levels. Noise associated with resource management and nonmilitary activities (i.e., increased public access, recreation, and grazing) would not be expected to result in significant noise effects. Intensive development such as extraction of mineral resources, would be expected to undergo individual assessment of noise levels at the time the proposal is submitted. There would be no disproportionately high and adverse noise effects on minority or low-income populations.

Increased ground access to TCPs, if identified on the returned lands, could make it easier for Native Americans to practice certain traditions.

If lands owned in-fee by the Army were exchanged for facilities in TAs 8 and 32, Fort Bliss would have a reduced capability to support its current air defense mission, and many installation facilities located on McGregor Range would have to be relocated. The loss of these facilities would result in the loss of several activities at Fort Bliss, and would result in a potential loss of military, civilian, and secondary jobs in the local economy, as well as, potential reductions in TDY personnel and expenditures related to training exercises (Section 4.10.5). The magnitude of the potential job loss would not be considered significant, given the projected future job growth in the ROI of more than 114,000 jobs between 2000 and 2015. There would be no disproportionately high and adverse socioeconomic impacts on minority or low-income populations from the No Action Alternative.

Alternative 5 would not cause environmental health or safety risks that would disproportionately affect children.

4.11.6 Alternative 6

Under Alternative 6, the returned area would be the same as described for Alternative 3, but the land would be designated as a NCA. Military uses would be the same as those described for Alternatives 3, 4, or 5, depending upon the extent of the defined returned area. Some shifting of range activities could occur that could modify patterns and sources of noise. However, this alternative requires congressional action for implementation. Because the precise nature and extent of the congressional action cannot be determined at this time, detailed environmental justice analysis of this alternative is deferred until the proposal is specified for this type of nonmilitary withdrawal by the DOI.

4.11.7 Cumulative Impacts

There would be no disproportionately high and adverse health or environmental effects on minority or low-income populations from cumulative effects of the project alternatives.

4.11.8 Mitigation

No mitigations are recommended for environmental justice.

4.11.9 Irreversible and Irretrievable Commitment of Resources

No irreversible and irretrievable commitment of resources would occur.

**McGregor Range Land Withdrawal
Legislative Environmental Impact Statement**

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